



## Louisiana Streamlining Commission

### *Department of Environmental Quality*

September 17, 2009

#### Preamble:

The reports that we at Mercatus have read to date suggest some ideas for re-organization in core government departments. These are ideas that may be useful to the Commission in its work.

#### Rational:

This recommendation is based on the concept of having a strong independent voice for environmental quality. It also seeks to free the department from operational matters where there is often a conflict of interest between policy and operations. We also observed that the Government of Louisiana currently has four substantial organizations operating in the field of environmental quality and conservation. It would appear logical from a policy and operational perspective to merge these activities to produce more consistency of policy application and to achieve operational efficiencies.

#### Department of Environmental Quality:

The Department of Environmental Quality would become a policy organization charged with the establishment of environmental values for the government but would cease operational activity. Environmental action would become the responsibility of the new Department of Conservation, which would assume responsibility for conservation actions. (The current title is our choice and could be different)

#### Implementation:

This is clearly a major undertaking and I do not believe that the Commission has the time or the expertise to develop an implementation plan or to identify all the changes to law necessary to put into effect the re-organization before the reporting date of December 15<sup>th</sup> 2009. The development of the appropriate plans should be the result of a full scoping study of all the issues and carried out by people with the proven capability to accomplish this scale of re-organization. This in all probability would require the letting of a private sector contract for this work.

#### Potential Recommendation: (Suggested wording only)

- The Streamlining Commission recommends that the Department of Environmental Quality become a policy organization charged with the development of environmental values for the State of Louisiana.